



# News Release

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**Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas)** <http://southwest.fws.gov>

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## WRIGHT'S MARSH THISTLE MAY WARRANT ESA PROTECTION

After review of a petition to list Wright's marsh thistle (*Cirsium wrightii*) as an endangered species and designate critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act (Act), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has determined the petition provides substantial information indicating that listing this species may be warranted.

This finding was announced today in the Federal Register, and opens a 60 day public comment period. To allow adequate time to conduct this review, the Service request's that information be received on or before November 9, 2009.

The Service will now initiate a more thorough status review of the species, and will issue a finding determining if listing is warranted. The Service is soliciting scientific and commercial data on the marsh thistle, and will make a determination on critical habitat if and when a listing action for this species is initiated.

Wright's marsh thistle is in the sunflower family. The plant is prickly with short black spines and a 3-to-8 ft single stalk covered with succulent leaves. Numerous slender flowering branches emerge from the stalk, starting about one-third up the length of the plant. Branches are terminated by one or a few small flowering heads, which have numerous slender leaves. Flowers vary in color from white to pale pink to vivid pink.

The species occurs in wet, alkaline soils in spring seeps and marshy edges of streams and ponds between 3,450 and 8,500 ft in elevation. Wright's marsh thistle is known to be present from the Pecos River Valley and the west slope of the Sacramento Mountains, in Chavez, Guadalupe, Otero, and Socorro Counties, New Mexico. It is unknown if the species still exists in its former range in Arizona, Texas, and Mexico.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).